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Film Annotation - “Blind Spot” Sustainability Problems

1. Title, director and release year?
    - “Blind Spot” produced in 2008 and directed by Adolfo Doring
2. What is the central argument or narrative of the film?
    - Illustrates oil and energy crisis present in society and its effect on society. It also tries to highlight some broad causes of the energy crisis.
3. How is the argument or narrative made or sustained? How much scientific information is provided, for example? Does the film have emotional appeal?
    - The narrative of this film is sustained by interviews with several activists, former and current industry leaders, professors and economists. Some have real experience in industry and their knowledge seems very applicable. However, little scientific evidence is provided throughout the film. The film definitely has an emotional appeal to it. It conveys a very dark and grim doom-and-gloom message. Little is offered in the way of solutions.
4. What sustainability problem does the film draw out? Political? Legal? Economical? Technical? Media and Informational? Organizational? Educational? Behavioral? Cultural? Ecological?
    - While most of the listed categories are effected by the oil and energy crisis the ones most focused on in the film were political, economic, technological, media and information, cultural and ecological. The film focused on how politicians are lobbied by large corporations or wealthy groups of people to pass legislation that allows for unsustainable practices to continue without penalty from law and regulations. It stated that these lobbyist efforts are driven by economic factors and increasing profits. The technological aspect comes into play when talking about how new technologies are ever increasing the demand for more energy. While technologies may become more efficient this only drives peoples to uses these technologies more. The media in large ignores many of the problems associated with the sustainability problems created by the oil and energy crisis but the internet is making information more available and easily distributed. The culture of the American people is based on consumerism. Everyone is always wanting the newest and best things. This consumerism increases demand and therefore increase the production which leads to the use of more petroleum products and energy. This is all tied into the environmental aspect with issues of pollution and global warming. As more energy is produced and more fossil fuels are burned greenhouse gas concentrations increase and so does particulate and other chemical pollution.
5. What parts of the film did you find most persuasive and compelling? Why?
    - The argument that the spike in availability of cheap energy in the form of fossil fuels has led to the increase in population and depletion of other resources was most compelling and easily followed for me. It makes sense that as fossil fuels were discovered there was an incredible leap in the amount of energy available. In fact “energy” in a form other than man power or animal power was exploited for the first time. This made people’s lives substantially easier. With people’s lives becoming easier there came the increase in production of food and other resources. This meant people could have larger families and be able to support them which in turn led the population to grow. This causes more of a demand for energy and so the cyclic problem begins.

6. What parts of the film were you not compelled or convinced by? Why?
    - The main feeling of the film did not compel me, in fact it may have even made me less motivated to act in order to fix the problems it discussed. The film was filled with negative things in order to illustrate the problem at hand. It did not address possible solutions of situations of hope. This left me as a viewer sort of down and thinking that the problem is already out of our hands and beyond fixing.
7. What audiences does this film best address? Why?
    - I believe this film best addresses passive viewers who do not want any real answers but only an illustration of a problem. It is probably appropriate for younger audiences or people who are newer to the ideas present in the film. It is a very braid overview of the topic so it does well to introduce the problems at hand and how they have been generated.
8. What could have been added to this film to enhance its environmental educational value?
    - This film could have used a more positive ending with some possible solutions or at least starts to corrective actions to address the problem presented. It left of on a negative note with no possible solutions.
9. What kinds of action and points of intervention are suggested by this film? If the film itself does not suggest corrective action, describe actions that you can imagine being effective.
    - The film does not address any real specific solutions. The possible reduction of population is mentioned but not elaborated. A possible solution or part of the solution would be to decrease our energy dependence of fossil fuels. According to the EIA's annual energy outlook for 2014 , in 2012 over 77% of the energy consumed in the United States was produced by fossil fuels while only 8% came from renewables, 8% came from nuclear and 1% from biofuels. This shows that by increasing the wind production of energy we can reduce the production of energy by fossil fuels and help to lower demand and consumption of oil.
10. What additional information has the film compelled you to seek out? (Provide at least two supporting references.)
    - The film lead me to seek some actual data on the energy production in the United States. This is where the data in the previous question was found. In the annual energy outlook report there was also information about tight oil and natural gas resources in the United States. It shows their projection for the energy production in the US and the production from coal decreases while the production from natural gas increases. The production form renewables also increase slightly. While natural gas is still a limited resource that produces greenhouse gasses and the methods used to mine it are questionable the production of energy from natural gas does emit fewer greenhouse gasses than coal. Also harnessing natural gas allows the energy levels of today to be sustained at least for some time more. Another thing the film lead me to explore is the required wind farm and capital needed to replace the fossil fuel energy production in the United States by wind power. This was done using software called RETScreen. 2.63 TW is the amount of power used annually in the United States (based on usage form 2010) from fossil fuels. In order to replace this energy with wind energy approximately 350,000 7.5MW turbines would be needed. This would lead to a net reduction in greenhouse gases of 1,325,200,275 tons of

CO2. This is the equivalent of not using 243,076,973 cars of light trucks or creating a forest that is double the size of Texas.

Bibliography

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